

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306295

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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306295

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CASC, UR, US

SUBJECT: MOSCOW JEWISH SYMPOSIUM

REF: A. STATE 304245, B. MOSCOW 19676
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1. SUMMARY: DEC 17 SOVIET EMBASSY RESPONDED TO DEPART-
MENT'S REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF INTENDING AMERICAN PAR-
TICIPANTS IN MOSCOW JEWISH CULTURAL SYMPOSIUM; SOVIET CONSUL
REPORTED ONE SCHOLAR IS PERMANENTLY BARRED FROM GOING TO
USSR, AND SIX ARE TEMPORARILY BARRED. EUR DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ARMITAGE CALLED IN SOVIET EMBASSY MINISTER COUN-
SELOR VORONTSOV DEC 17 TO EMPHASIZE DEPARTMENT'S INTEREST
AND ITS HOPE SYMPOSIUM WILL BE PERMITTED TO OCCUR WITHOUT
INCIDENT. VORONTSOV WAS UNYIELDING IN DESCRIBING PLANS

FOR SYMPOSIUM AS PROVOCATION INSTIGATED FROM ABROAD. AT ONE POINT HE SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT SYMPOSIUM WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO OCCUR, BUT HE SUBSEQUENTLY SEEMED TO DESCRIBE IT AS A NON-EVENT IN SOVIET GOVERNMENT EYES, LEAVING UNCLEAR WHETHER ANY SYMPOSIUM WITHOUT FOREIGN PARTICIPATION MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO TAKE PLACE. END SUMMARY

2. MORNING DEC 17 SOVIET EMBASSY CONSUL MALNEV PHONED EUR/SOV IN RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT'S DECEMBER 15 REPRESENTATION (REF A) IN SUPPORT OF VISA APPLICATIONS OF EIGHT PERSONS IN US WISHING TO BE IN MOSCOW DURING JEWISH CULTURAL SYMPOSIUM. MALNEV REPORTED THAT ON THE BASIS OF INSTRUCTIONS FROM MOSCOW, ENTRY INTO THE USSR IS CLOSED PERMANENTLY FOR ISRAEL GREENBERG; THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAS NO RECORD OF A VISA APPLICATION BY LEON JICK; AND ENTRY INTO THE USSR IS CLOSED TEMPORARILY TO THE REMAINING SIX ON DEPARTMENT'S LIST -- MARVIN HER,OG, JACOB NEUSNER, BARUCH LEVINE, MARSHALL SKLARE, HENRY FEINGOLD, AND HAROLD SCHULWEISS. MALNEV SAID THE LATTER SIX MAY REAPPLY AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL RECONSIDER THEIR APPLICATIONS, BUT THE EMBASSY CANNOT PREDICT WHETHER VISAS WOULD BE GRANTED. DEPTOFF ASKED IF MALNEV COULD GIVE ANY REASONS FOR THE REFUSALS, AND MALNEV PROFESSED NOT TO HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE REASONS. (DEPARTMENT INFORMED CSCE COMMISSION AND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY OF MALNEV'S RESPONSE.)
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3. AT NOON DECEMBER 17 MEETING ARMITAGE EXPRESSED TO VORONTSOV THE DEPARTMENT'S INTEREST IN THE VISA CASES OF THE AMERICANS WISHING TO PARTICIPATE AND OUR HOPE THAT THE SYMPOSIUM WILL BE PERMITTED TO OCCUR WITHOUT INCIDENT. ARMITAGE NOTED THAT THE SYMPOSIUM AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD IT WILL BE OF WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES.

4. VORONTSOV REPLIED THAT THE SYMPOSIUM IS NOT REGISTERED IN SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES IN THE USSR, IT HAS NO SPONSOR, AND THERE WILL BE SYMPOSIUM. VORONTSOV CITED THE POSITION EXPRESSED BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE POPOV, AS REPORTED BY TASS ON DECEMBER 8 (POPOV HAD DESCRIBED EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE THE SYMPOSIUM AS A QUOTE PROVOCATIVE PLAN THAT CONTRAVENES SOVIET LAW.UNQUOTE). VORONTSOV REPEATED THAT THERE ARE QUOTE NO PLANS TO HAVE SUCH A SYMPOSIUM NOW. UNQUOTE

5. ARMITAGE POINTED OUT THE RELEVANCE OF THE CSCE, PARTICULARLY THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE. VORONTSOV RETORTED THAT THE SPONSORS OF THE SYMPOSIUM ARE OUTSIDE THE USSR, IN ISRAEL AND THE US, AND THE SYMPOSIUM IS QUOTE A PLANT UNQUOTE. QUOTE IT IS A PITY OUR JEWISH PEOPLE ARE BEING USED THAT WAY, UNQUOTE VORONTSOV CONTINUED.

6. ARMITAGE ALLUDED TO RECENT FAVORABLE TRENDS IN EMIGRATION (I.E., A MODEST INCREASE IN ISSUANCE OF EXIT VISAS) AND COMMENTED THAT HE HOPED THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THIS AREA OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS COULD BECOME MORE FAVORABLE. VORONTSOV REPLIED THAT QUOTE SUCH TRENDS WOULD CONTINUE, BUT IN A NORMAL USEFUL WAY UNQUOTE; THE FAVORABLE TRENDS COULD ONLY BE DISRUPTED BY PLANS FOR THE SYMPOSIUM, WHICH WERE THE WORK OF QUOTE OVERZEALOUS MESSIANIC PEOPLE IN TEL AVIV UNQUOTE. VORONTSOV CLAIMED THAT INVITATIONS TO THE SYMPOSIUM WERE SENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PERSONS IN THE USSR BY ORGANIZERS ABROAD -- PERSONS WITH QUOTE FREE TIME, FREE MONEY AND FREE PUBLICITY UNQUOTE.

7. ARMITAGE NOTED THAT SOVIET GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSION OF THE SYMPOSIUM COULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE SITUATION HERE. VORONTSOV SUGGESTED THAT ORGANIZATIONS QUOTE NOT INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES UNQUOTE WOULD TRY TO EXPLOIT THE ISSUE. HE CHARACTERIZED THE SYMPOSIUM AS QUOTE A DEMONSTRATION, A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION, WITH NOTHING TO DO WITH CULTURE. UNQUOTE HE DESCRIBED IT AS QUOTE NOT THE FIRST AND NOT THE LAST, BUT ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF PROVOCATIONS. UNQUOTE HE COMMENTED THAT QUOTE THERE WILL BE NO SYMPOSIUM -- WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT IT. UNQUOTE

8. VORONTSOV ADMONISHED THE DEPARTMENT TO QUOTE DO NOTHING RASH ON THE STATE-TO-STATE LEVEL UNQUOTE, AND HE CHIDED ARMITAGE FOR REPORTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN HAD ANNOUNCED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS PROTESTING TO THE SOVIETS THE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS' VISA REFUSALS. VORONTSOV CALLED THE SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS QUOTE NOT HELPFUL UNQUOTE, AND QUOTE PERHAPS A NICE THING FOR INTERNAL CONSUMPTION BUT NOT FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. UNQUOTE

9. ARMITAGE REITERATED THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE SYMPOSIUM IS LIABLE TO BECOME A CAUSE CELEBRE, AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF THAT IN ITS HANDLING OF THE SYMPOSIUM.

10. COMMENT: IN HIS INITIAL REMARKS (PARA 4), VORONTSOV SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT THE SYMPOSIUM WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO OCCUR, BUT HIS LATER COMMENTS (PARA 7) SEEMED TO LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT MIGHT TREAT IT AS A NON-EVENT, BUT PERHAPS NOT TOTALLY SUPPRESS IT. WHAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL DO, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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WHETHER VORONTSOV KNEW, WAS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. END
COMMENT
KISSINGER

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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